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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 AF-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 SSM-03 TRSE-00
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7012
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EG, US, UR, SOPN
SUBJECT: SOVIETS COMMENT ON LATEST MIDDLE EAST EVENTS

SUMMARY: SOVIET PRESS COMMENTARY ON THE MIDDLE EAST CONTINUES TO CONDEMN SADAT, ISRAEL, AND THE U.S. MOSCOW APPEARS UNCERTAIN HOW LATEST EVENTS WILL WORK THEMSELVES OUT BUT SEEMS TO FORESEE FURTHER EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI CONTACTS. END SUMMARY.

1. YULII YAKHONTOV DEALS WITH LATEST MIDDLE EASTERN EVENTS IN INTERNATIONAL WEEK REVIEW IN PRAVDA OF JAN. 22. THE BASIC THEME
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IS A CONTINUATION OF THAT WHICH MOSCOW HAS REFINED IN RECENT WEEKS: ISRAEL, FULLY SUPPORTED BY THE US, CONTINUES TO ATTEMPT TO DRIVE EGYPT TO FURTHER CONCESSIONS. SADAT, IN THE END, WAS FORCED TO RECALL HIS FOREIGN MINISTER BUT WILL CONTINUE IN HIS CAPITULATIONIST COURSE. THE LATEST MIDDLE EASTERN EVENTS, MOREOVER, DEMONSTRATE THAT THE PATH TAKEN BY SADAT LEADS TO AN AGGRAVATION OF AN ALREADY DANGEROUSLY EXPLOSIVE SITUATION.

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YAKHONTOV CONCLUDES THAT A SETTLEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST MUST BE COMPREHENSIVE AND INCLUDE ALL INTERESTED PARTIES, INCLUDING THE PLO. "THIS CAN BE ACHIEVED AT A GENEVA CONFERENCE," YAKHONTOV ADDS, SO LONG AS SUCH A CONFERENCE IS NOT USED AS A SCREEN TO HIDE A SEPARATE SETTLEMENT.

2. TASS, IN AN ARTICLE IN PRAVDA OF JANUARY 23, REPORTS SADAT'S DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE ON HIS CURRENT COURSE, WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN
MARKED BY "SERIOUS CONCESSIONS" TO ISRAEL. TASS REPORTS SADAT'S REQUEST FOR US ARMS TO MATCH THOSE OF ISRAEL, NOTING THAT HE EVIDENTLY INTENDS TO USE THEM AGAINST RADICAL REGIMES IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA. FINALLY, TASS ASSESSES ISRAEL'S DECISION TO DELAY SENDING ITS MILITARY DELEGATION TO CAIRO AS AN EFFORT "TO PUT PRESSURE ON CAIRO."

3. COMMENT: AS THE WEEKEND COMMENTARY SUGGESTS, MOSCOW IS CAUTIOUS IN ASSESSING THE LATEST EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE USSR NATURALLY HOPES THAT SADAT GETS WHAT IT REGARDS AS HIS JUST DESSERTS BUT APPEARS TO FEEL THAT THERE IS STILL LIFE IN THE CURRENT ROUND OF CONTACTS. AS PRESENTED IN THE PRESS AT LEAST, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN SOVIET POLICY IN RECENT WEEKS AND WE CAN ONLY ASSUME THAT THE SOVIETS ARE STILL TRYING TO WORK OUT SOME BASIS FOR UNITY AMONG THE RADICALS. IN THIS SENSE, A CONTINUATION OF THE EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI CONTACTS PROVIDES A GREATER SENSE OF URGENCY TO THE NEED FOR UNITY THAN
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WOULD BE THE CASE IF THESE CONTACTS FELL THROUGH COMPLETELY. MOSCOW THEREOFORE MAY FEEL THAT CONTINUED, BUT FRUITLESS, EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI TALKS WILL ASSIST IT IN DRAWING THE RADICALS TOGETHER UNDER SOME FORM OF SOVIET LEADERSHIP. WE STILL SEE LITTLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS FOR THIS EFFORT, HOWEVER.
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